

Guided Meditation: In the Light of Non-Distracted

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So hello and welcome. And it perhaps goes without saying that a session of meditation is a session of practice. Buddhist meditation involves Buddhist practice. Yes. And one of the great moments, or moments that happen repeatedly, experiences in doing Buddhist practice, is having some kind of experience that confirms the value of the practice. So that a person knows for themselves this practice is good.

This practice works. And not only in some kind of small way, but it's confirmed how profoundly significant, invaluable this practice is. And it can be profoundly inspiring. So that no matter what circumstance we're in, we know we have something we can do. Even if we're confused, even if it's uncertain what to do in conventional ways, at least we can bring the practice into what we're doing, what's happening here.

And so in talking about the practice, that involves a deep confidence in a few things, deep confidence in not being distracted. Right. Deep confidence in being undistracted. And it's a deep confidence in not making it worse. Deep confidence in not bringing to bear to the situation any unwholesome attachments, any unwholesome behavior, speech, or states of mind, activities of mind. To not be involved in anything that fits under the category of greed, anything that fits under the category of hatred or ill-will, and to not complicate the situation by having doubt or having some kind of indecisiveness, confusion, about what can be done.

We might not know what to do practically, but we always know that we don't have to sacrifice or give up our practice to be present, to be here, to be open. And so one way of understanding this, it makes it a little simple, is to appreciate when we're not distracted, the moments we're not distracted, and that we create, that we can just open, create an empty, open state of awareness. We can turn on the light of awareness and let it shine on whatever is happening. And it's equivalent to having the blackout curtains covering a greenhouse. When we're distracted, it's like having a blackout curtain on. And the plants don't grow without the light.

What can grow is mold and disease in the plants. But if the blackout curtains are pulled aside, then something can grow. And the mold begins to dry out, begins to fade away. And the plant, the beautiful plants in the greenhouse then can thrive and grow in the sunlight. So in the same way, when we're distracted, it's a little bit like putting on, you know, covering something over. So the light of awareness can't shine on it.

And then what's unwholesome and unhealthy tends to grow. Distraction feeds more distraction, distraction fed by unwholesome motivations, strengthens those motivations, distractions fueled by fear, strengthens fear. But if we shine the light of awareness on the distracted mind, on the fear, on the desires, the aversions that exist there, they begin to dry up or fade away. And in that light, what wholesomeness grows? So in this meditation, to have confidence in being undistracted. You'll still be distracted. Your mind will still wander off. But then remember to come back, to shine the light of awareness on what's here.

Sunlight doesn't interfere, doesn't, I mean it doesn't, the sun doesn't, is not concerned whether plants grow or not. It just sends, without any desires, without any interference, in a sense, the sun just shines its light. So in the same way, shine the light of your awareness on what's happening within you, unconcerned with how what you're seeing, and see what shifts. So to assume a meditation posture and adjust your posture in such a way that there's some feeling of being intentionally present with your whole body. Maybe even if you're lying down to adjust your spine, vision, your shoulder blades, the positioning of your head, maybe the positions of your hands, arms. So there's a feeling of being more intentional, more deliberate with a posture of attention, and then gently closing your eyes, and as a way to awaken a greater attentiveness, a greater attention.

Embodied awareness, gently taking some fuller breaths, as if the sensations that come into play as you breathe in are the awakening of embodied awareness and then the sensations of exhale are riding sensations of relaxation, softening. And for a few more breaths to deliberately breathe deeper, and notice the natural awareness that shines its light is available to feel and sense the sensations of the body breathing. And letting that awareness continue as you return your breathing to a normal breath. Breathing in, then letting awareness shine on the quality, sensations of your thinking mind. And as you exhale, to relax the thinking mind. And notice also if there's any mood or emotion that seems to be the fuel or the source of your thinking. And shine a light of awareness on that, without being disturbed by it or needing to do anything about it. Just notice the mood, emotion, attitude, and then letting the emotion be, centering yourself in the body breathing.

And for three or four breaths, see if you can get a feeling for a sense of being undistracted

for one inhale and one exhale. Undistracted, open, receptive, as if the light has been turned on, the blackout curtains pulled aside. As you sense and feel breathing. And whenever you wander off in thought, whenever you're distracted, see if you can at that moment appreciate that you're not distracted. You know you're thinking. And just imagine that without changing anything, you turn on the light more fully, to be here, undistracted, letting your light shine on whatever is present moment for you.

If you can be undistracted, meaning you can be aware of what's actually happening without being for or against it or fixing it or making something different happen. What happens? What unfolds when you, in a sense, get out of the way with an undistracted attention, with a light of awareness turned on? And then as we come to the end of the sitting, imagine if you can being with other people, being with someone else, where all you do is turn on the light of awareness to be present, with your heart, your mind, to have a presence of attention that is soft, easy, as the light is from the sun, where you see people clearly, fully, without the filter of distraction, preoccupation, projection, needs and wants, aversions and resentments, gazing upon the world softly, calmly, where the light of awareness allows us to see people in a way that it's easier to wish them well. It's easier to care for them or appreciate them. May it be that this practice that we do allows us to turn on the light of appreciation, light of seeing, knowing others, so we can wish them well.

May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. May all beings be free from us by the simplicity of our awareness. Thank you.